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An Ideal Soldier

Sickles at Gettysburg

BY

General dePeyster

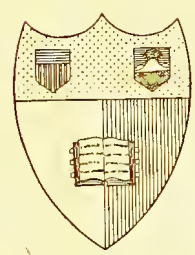
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AN IDEAL SOLDIER.

A Tribute to Maj.-Gen. Daniel E. Sickles.

A CONSPICUOUS FIGURE

Among His Countrymen, Faithful to Every Trust.

IN WAR AND PEACE.

Sketch of His Life and Analysis of His Character.

BY BREVET MAJ.-GEN. J. WATTS DE PEYSTER, N. Y.
I.



AMONG the "Concette," or apologues, in a famous Italian poem, which serve to "illustrate and adorn a general principle," is one so "just and ingenious," that it may be quoted as a fitting preface to a biographical sketch of an officer whom a "peculiar people"—the "Old Third Corps as we understand it"—delight to honor; their former commander and the representative man of

the whole Volunteer Service, Maj.-Gen. Daniel E. Sickles, U. S. A. The conception of the noble poet reads as follows:

Attached to the thread of every man's life is a little medal, whereon each man's name is inscribed, which Time, waiting on the shears of Fate, catches up, as they fall from the inexorable steel, and bears to the river *Lethe* [the waters of oblivion], into which, were it not for certain birds which keep flying about its banks, they would be immediately submerged. These birds, however, seize the medals before they fall, and bear them for a time up and down in their beaks, with much noise and flutter; but, careless of their charge, or unable to support it, most of them soon drop their shining prey, one after another, into the stream of oblivion.

[This phase of the fable presents the idea of those temporary reputations which do not possess within themselves the vitality of any real claim to the remembrance and honor of men, or those other unhappy ones who, by lack of attention or the mental blindness of the world, fall into the innumerable ranks of neglected genius and are either at once forgotten or are obscured by tempests, mists, or distance, as to grandeur of soul, from the groveling or least-led herd.]

Nevertheless—the poet proceeds to sing as some comfort to these "prisoners of Hope," the truly deserving—among these [birds] heedless carriers of Fame, are a few *Swan*s, who, when they catch a medal, convey it carefully to the Temple of Immortality, where it is consecrated. These *Swan*s, of later ages, have indeed been *rare* *aves*: What innumerable names have been dropped into the dark stream of oblivion, for one that has been consecrated in the bright Temple of Immortality!

It is indeed difficult to assign the reasons why talents equally promising should, even under the like early cultivation, bear such unequal crops of Fame. But if we attend minutely to the causes by which men have acquired renown, we shall find

that perhaps the far greater part owed their reputation to adventitious circumstances, concurring to excite their emulation, and render application fruitful.

Among the few distinguished characters, however, whose names are rescued from oblivion, and enrolled in the bright annals of Fame, they stand in the most conspicuous line, who have reaped the harvest of glory in the active scenes of life. The bulk of mankind are more solicitous to learn the history of statesmen and warriors, than to be acquainted with the calm and tranquil pursuits of poets and philosophers.

This seems to be a very apposite introduction to the biographical sketch of an American citizen who has not only won distinction as a statesman and as a warrior, but in every other line which he has pursued—

MAJ.-GEN. DANIEL E. SICKLES, U. S. A.

As a student, Sickles was strongly given to literary pursuits, and became so proficient in them as to be able on one occasion to take the place of a professor in the examination of his collegiate class. Literature was his first line of success. However, he chose the law as his profession. Among his instructors had been the highly-esteemed Judge William Kent, Attorney-General Butler, and Thatcher T. Payne, brother of John Howard Payne, author of "Home, Sweet Home." As a lawyer Sickles soon acquired a lucrative practice, both as an advocate and as counsel, and in this, his second line, his success was assured.

He soon added to his regular profession that of politics; for that is a profession in all countries as much as any other. In this third line he also achieved great success. He soon became an acting and directing manager in the different political organizations of the city and State of New York. Twice he was tendered the office of

COLLECTOR OF THE PORT OF NEW YORK, a most lucrative position for anyone looking only to gain. On the first occasion the appointment was offered by President Pierce, in 1853, and again by President Johnson, in 1866. He was no doubt the youngest man to whom this important charge was ever tendered.

Sickles preferred, rather than to become the head of the most important Custom-House in the country, with its high salary and opportunities of making money, to go to London and the Court of St. James, with Mr. Buchanan, as his Secretary of Legation, and was, perhaps, also the youngest man who ever filled that office. He began the diplomatic studies by which he afterward so greatly profited as to win the highest distinction in this his fourth distinct line, under Mr. Buchanan, preparing his briefs for him for the important discussions conducted with Lord Palmerston and with Lord Clarendon, veterans in statecraft, in the Ministry of the Earl of Aberdeen. In these important negotiations—for it was at a period when the Secretary of State, Marcy, was making things lively for his subordinates—how much soever astuteness was manifested by the cunning old Minister, credit for much of the solid brainwork should inure to the close application, keen perception, and intuitive judgment of

THE ABLE YOUNG SECRETARY.

In the State Legislature, Sickles had been a member of both branches or Houses. He had also been in Congress during the four

years immediately preceding the war, and on the floor of the House made his mark in this, his fifth line, as a debater.

It did not take long to convince such an acute and close observer as Sickles, that after the fall of Sumter and the events rapidly succeeding, the country was to be involved in a great and long war; that its salvation was not to be accomplished by law or logic,



MAJ.-GEN. DANIEL E. SICKLES.

but by the sword and musket in the hands of every man strong in feeling and in faith, in energy and in exertion, in devotion and determination.

He cast aside the pen, threw off the toga, and buttoned on the uniform, and in this, again, his sixth line—military—as organizer, administrator—combining, in himself all the charges performed by so many different officers in the Regular service—as Colonel; as Brigadier over a brigade of five regiments, which came to exist solely through him; as Major-General, winning his two stars

UPON THE BATTLEFIELD,

first commanding a famous division and then an even more famous corps—he became best known to that class who constitute the majority of the readers of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, the patriotic veterans of those magnificent armies—East and West, but particularly of the most trustworthy army which has existed in our times—the Army of the Potomac—which fought out triumphantly the "Great American Conflict," the four years' battles of right against wrong, of freedom against oppression, in suppressing the Slaveholders' Rebellion.

While presenting to the readers of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE this memoir—brief, as compared to the mass of material in hand—of Maj.-Gen. Sickles, it is difficult to do full justice to one who is a complete type of the American *per se*; that is, a man formed by our institutions, and so developed by them and their influences upon the basis of natural abilities as to be

FIT FOR EVERY POSITION

to which he has been called by ordinary and extraordinary circumstances.

His career is an eminent proof of the re-

verse of the proverb—or the truth of one of the most striking exceptions to an acknowledged rule—that one who undertakes to shine on the most opposite lines cannot become a proficient in any. Sickles has embraced the most contrary professions, and in each and all has been rewarded with such brilliant success as demonstrates that he possesses a remarkable combination of innate or intrinsic capacity, adaptability and comprehensive power. He has swung like a pendulum from the extremes of politics to soldiery, sweeping in like manner through the intermediate degrees from common law to diplomacy or statesmanship, and in each and every position assumed with self-confidence, or imposed by the people upon him, through their faith in him, the individual of their choice, he has made his mark,

AND A SHINING ONE,

in the history of the period which has elapsed since he attained man's estate.

He has not only served his constituents and country with success and sagacity, but he has borne himself with such courteous dignity and mental force that he has made world-wide talk, and excited wonder at the lad who grew into the Representative in Congress, the persuasive and—in that sense—eloquent orator, the reliable lawyer, the able soldier, the excellent General, and the accomplished diplomat—capable in all these of matching himself against the brightest spirits of the age, in the halls of legislation or of justice; upon the rostrum or in the *senaculum*; upon the "sublime" battlefield and amid the less grand but equally important preparations for the bloody struggle which tried and tested the manliest souls, and at foreign courts. Indeed, at Madrid, during a period of unusual difficulty, he proved himself a fit exponent of American feeling. He bore himself with such a manly straightforwardness and mental power as to win the confidence, on the one hand, of the Executive who sent him thither to represent this, the

GREATEST REPUBLIC OF ALL TIME;

and on the other hand, the respect of those who administered the affairs of a people the most susceptible and jealous, the most difficult to bring to a resultive decision among the family of European nations.

As memoirs admitted into a newspaper must necessarily be too restricted in space to admit of a detailed examination of the life of even the greatest of our representative men, therefore the retrospect of this man's wonderful career will be restricted to a period commencing when the initiative clash of the "Great American Conflict" summoned every citizen to take sides for or against the Union.

At first, after passing from youth to manhood, Sickles won distinction in literary pursuits under difficulties with which few men would have been able to grapple successfully. He actually, when not yet a man, took his disabled professor's place at short notice and discharged the duty perfectly, to the astonishment of all. Then he made his mark in politics, and took a high position at a time when there were great men in the field; not the mere weak creatures of cir-

cumstances who have greatness thrust upon them, who as a rule fill our public offices at this time. Sickles

PROVED HIS CAPACITY

when that quality was absolutely necessary to obtain popularity, since the vast majority of our people then were, as yet, thinking Americans, not a stupendous hash of inferior races, with very little of the solid meat of honest Americanism in it.

When Buchanan was Minister to England, Sickles was his Secretary of Legation and the *deus ex machina*—the power behind the throne; and if he did not possess the cunning of "Old Buck," to those who are acquainted with both men there is little doubt that the younger man possessed the solid brains. Sickles was Secretary of Legation, and unquestionably the most trusted adviser of the future President from Pennsylvania.

Nevertheless, it was not until the war to put down the Slaveholders' Rebellion had become a most sorrowful accomplished fact that Sickles showed himself in his true, brilliant colors. He at once rose to the occasion and demonstrated that he was among the ablest of the land. His triumph, indeed, was the greater, because there seemed to be a general conspiracy not to permit him to manifest his diverse talents. It was a fortunate thing for him that

HE MET WITH DIFFICULTIES,

because in completely overcoming them he proved that he was equal not only to them, but to every occasion—and a man who is always equal to the occasion, whether in literature; as a student; as a politician elected to discharge responsible duties; as a lawyer, capable to grapple with tact, learning and success, the most difficult questions against wealthy corporations and individuals, unscrupulous in their methods as they were wealthy in resources; as a soldier and General, inferior to few on record, both in organization and command, but entirely destitute of professional training and experience; as an administrator firm and sagacious, under circumstances as difficult and trying as have ever occurred in Government, in which so many in Europe have utterly failed; and as a diplomatist, winning respect for his Government and for himself, and what is more, the regard of the most exalted personages in situations calculated to test the nobility and commonsense of

ANY PUBLIC CHARACTER.

His behavior on one occasion so won what might be termed the affection of the House of Orleans, that the Count of Paris in a letter to the author of this sketch used the most flattering language of positive regard for Sickles, who has proved a very Proteus in his change of characters and services, in all of these displaying wisdom and courage. Such is a *rara avis* indeed.

Very few individuals—even among those who might be supposed to have enjoyed the very best opportunities for knowing—have any idea of the vast trouble encountered by Sickles in raising his Excelsior Brigade, or the fortune he expended in accomplishing his purpose. Without an iron will, unusual sagacity and unshrinking determination, it could not have been carried through. At first blush it may seem like flattery to speak so strongly, but sober second thought will show it cannot be that; for the writer has nothing to gain by

doing justice and expressing the opinion that it is doubtful if another man in the country could have

GONE SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH

what Sickles did and won all that he achieved. After the work was done and the brigade was organized, it might naturally be supposed that the result would have been accepted with gratitude; but there were influences at work at Washington so perverted, so narrow, so ungenerous, that they could not see that their littleness might ruin the country, or if they did perceive it or could entertain any idea of the magnitude of the danger, their ignorances, their caste prejudices or their selfishness, including a dread of diminishing their own consequence, either blinded them, or seared their consciences, or perverted their judgments.

And here it may be proper to observe, although it may seem a digression, that the country was saved in spite of its rulers, in spite of its political schools and its professionals, by just such men as Sickles; and it was under the blessing of God that there was

ENOUGH AMERICANISM

still sufficiently potent to leaven the whole mass, to enable such a man as Sickles eventually to assume his proper place and trample under foot envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness.

Sickles is not the only man. Logan was a victim, to a great extent, to the same malign influences, and it was the same spirit that prevented the latter from being placed at the head of the Army of the Tennessee. It was the same spirit that condoned the crimes of men who ought to have received the extreme of punishment. It is the same spirit which today contests the glory of Sickles at Gettysburg, and casts a double and triple veil before their eyes for fear that the brilliancy of that glory should pierce the obstacles they oppose and make them to see.

As before stated, very few knew the difficulties and expense Sickles underwent and overcame in getting up, holding together, and carrying to the front, intact, the five New York regiments: 70th—of which Sickles was first Colonel—71st, 72d, 73d and 74th. These constituted the

"EXCELSIOR BRIGADE."

They were brought forward in block at a critical moment—yes, indeed, at a crisis—and thus were worth more to the country than a whole division might have been at any future time.

Gen. Sickles, in a very able paper read before the Military Service Institution on Governor's Island, set forth a great many of his experiences in this connection, and made many valuable suggestions, founded on the same, whereby the difficulties might be avoided in case circumstances should ever arise requiring summary exertions on the part of the Government to defend itself in a cataclysm.

There are a great many interesting particulars belonging to the period between the raising and mustering in of the Excelsior Brigade, the taking it on to Washington at a crisis, and the getting it into the field, and the date when its commander had risen triumphant over all

* In looking over a long correspondence the following turned up, which seems worthy of insertion as a note at this point:

How much did it cost you to raise the Excelsior Brigade? \$60,000 out of your own and your father's pocket? That would be a very interesting item, the difficulties you had to overcome, and triumphantly overcome. Talk of McClellan's organizing the Army of the Potomac; it was child's play in comparison to yours. He had the unbounded backing and vast wealth of a Government; officers more experienced individually and together than himself; the bases were laid and the skeleton (or *caubres*) existed. It was child's play for him himself, and he had the pattern which McDowell had prepared in getting together the Army of Northern Virginia. Theoretically, no able man lived than McDowell. He could construct the man-machine scientifically, and if it had been a mere *material* machine he could have worked it as well as any living man, but it was in working with *human* machinery that he failed, in that he could not "enthus" men, to use a slang expression because he was as cold as a stone, and it requires something hot itself to impart heat and life, for never was a truer maxim: "Heat is life and cold is death."

his embarrassments and saw his ability acknowledged, and the path to renown thrown open to him.

In speaking of Sickles's military capacity, an excellent proof of it was manifested by his able reconnoissance into the rebel domain the first opportunity which offered itself. This was styled at the time

SICKLES'S RAID TO STAFFORD COURT-HOUSE.

In March and April, 1862, Hooker's Division—afterward Second of "White Diamond," of the Third Corps—lay in camp around Liverpool Point, on the lower Potomac, some 50 miles south of Washington, opposite Shipping Point, where the river is widest. On the south side the rebels had strong batteries and considerable force. Very large storehouses for rations and forage had been established at Liverpool Point because the river at this bend was too broad for the rebel guns, except those of extraordinary caliber, one of which had been burst in firing.

As may be generally remembered, when Joe Johnston slipped out of McClellan's hands at Manassas, in March, 1862, the enemy could not be found. McClellan searched in vain for him on his front. Finally he set down to Hooker, who was posted on the left flank of the Army of the Potomac, as stated above, at Liverpool Point, to see if something could be done to get some trustworthy information. Hooker turned over the duty to Sickles. In itself this was a compliment.

About the 1st of April Sickles selected 1,000 men—200 from each of his five regiments—who, in light marching order—i. e., with nothing but arms and ammunition and cooked rations for two days, transported and escorted by the navy, crossed from Liverpool Point to Shipping Point, on the Virginia side, to test the force and positions of the rebels by positively "feeling of them." Sickles's force landed at Shipping Point, which had been evacuated by the rebels, leaving "Quaker" guns in position—a little after day—and by 7 or 8 a. m. the Excelsiors commenced their audacious advance into the interior toward Fredericksburg, unmolested. They had proceeded—sending on scouts in every direction—to within a short distance of Potomac Creek, and within a few miles of Stafford Court-house, 20 miles from Shipping Point, when they ran into the videts of a regiment of rebel cavalry, thrown out to meet them in consequence of information furnished by negroes, who had been sent forward to spread the report that Sickles's command was

THE ADVANCE GUARD

of the Army of the Potomac. As the General commanding knew that the success of his movement depended on his preventing the rebels from obtaining a correct estimate of his force, he ordered an immediate advance at double-quick.

Now was the spectacle seen of a complete subversion of military rules. Instead of cavalry charging infantry, infantry charged cavalry, drawn up in line of battle and ready to charge and stampede the latter. The horse fell back in confusion upon two regiments of North Carolina infantry, posted with some artillery to defend the bridge across Potomac Creek. These, in turn, became alarmed, abandoned their position, and horse and foot streamed back through Stafford Court-house upon Fredericksburg, where Beauregard had massed his troops, abandoning, in their haste, all that they had in their camps, which Sickles destroyed. Thus the bridge (tete-de-pont) was seized and occupied without resistance, and Sickles advanced to a hill overlooking Stafford Court-house, beyond which lay the camps of the rebel cavalry encountered this side of Potomac Creek. Here Sickles halted, bivouacked, threw out his pickets, detached a provost-guard to protect the village and fed his troops on

THE SUPPLIES CAPTURED

in the rebel cavalry camp. There was in New York city a clock taken from Stafford Court-house, and brought back by one of the Excelsior Brigade.

While the Excelsiors were enjoying the halt of two hours Sickles was gathering all needed

information about the enemy, and sent scouts to the river to communicate with the gunboats, which he expected to follow on his flank down the Potomac and cover him if outnumbered and pushed by the enemy. Nothing could be seen or heard of the gunboats. They dropped down the river some eight or ten miles—as far as the naval commander, McLaw, believed it possible for Sickles to march—and then returned to Shipping Point, where he supposed he would find Sickles's force. In a private letter the General says:

I at once decided to return by the same road I took in the advance, thinking the enemy would suspect I might seek safety from pursuit in detours and cross-roads. My guess was a good one, for while I took the more direct route the enemy wasted time in looking for me everywhere, and so I got back to my place of embarkation—Shipping Point—at daylight on the following morning, having marched 40 miles in 24 hours, defeated a force of double my numbers supported by artillery, and gaining full information of the position and numbers and disposition of the enemy.

By this time the rebels had learned the true numerical strength of the column which had thus audaciously ventured on the sacred soil of Virginia. The rebel General commanding thereupon organized three flying columns and sent them out on as many different roads in the hope of catching and "nipping" Sickles on his retreat to the Potomac. Fortunately these erred, from the miscalculation that the Union General would return by a different route from that by which he advanced. Sickles suffered his troops to remain resting on the side of a hill, where he had posted them at sundown, when he retired

BY THE SHORTEST ROUTE—

not the one which it was supposed he would take—while the rebels followed on the longest circuitous roads. The rebel cavalry cautiously pursued, hovering upon the adjacent elevations, but did not show themselves in considerable strength until the Unionists arrived within six miles of the river. The Excelsiors left Stafford Court-house about dusk in the evening, and reached the bank of the Potomac—where the navy was lying, to cover the re-embarkation—toward daylight.

The next morning, while waiting to embark and secure the captured horses, about 40 in number, the rebels made slight attacks upon stragglers. On this occasion a Gatling gun (then known as coffee-mill guns) was brought into play, and proved effective at a range of 1,500 yards. This was the first time this species of artillery was used against any enemy. When the Excelsiors first landed, they dragged it along by hand, but soon tiring of this experiment they impressed horses, improvised harness, and got it along expeditiously, and serviceably, as it proved. In the face of the enemy, the Excelsiors built a raft to ferry over the

captured animals, and in the course of the day arrived at Liverpool Point. One of the horses, shortly after the brigade arrived before Yorktown, bolted straight

INTO THE ENEMY'S LINE,

as if to seek the original owner, and in return, as if to equalize matters, another quadruped, a dog, came over into the Excelsior camp.

The most curious fact in connection with the whole expedition—showing how completely the rebels had been surprised, and how resultive it might have been made had it been adequately supported—only one man was wounded in the Excelsior column. A number of saddles were emptied among the rebel cavalry, stores to a considerable amount were captured, used or destroyed, and McDowell's advance on Fredericksburg and the occupation of that city were doubtless based on the information received on his trip from Liverpool Point to Washington in company with Gen. Sickles. This trip occurred shortly after the reconnoissance, Sickles having been relieved from his command immediately on his return from the ably-conducted and adventurous raid herein described.

For this reconnoissance Sickles never received a word of acknowledgment from anybody besides Hooker. If a West Pointer or a Regular officer had done the same service, the trumpets of Headquarters would have

BLOWN THEMSELVES HOARSE

in sounding of "this brilliant, daring, etc., achievement."

While claiming that this article is entirely my own and original, it may be alleged that in letter or spirit some of the incidents told by the same pen have appeared elsewhere. That is true. The writer has been presenting to the public phases of the life of Sickles throughout the last 20-odd years, and is perfectly acquainted with all the details of his illustrious career, and has in hand all except a period of some months, including Fredericksburg. The details of that time were confided to another for revision and never returned—reported lost.

Nevertheless, as a novelist who has recently and rapidly won a remarkable position in his line, on being accused of plagiarism, after several, nay many, savage attacks, published a reply in which the following paragraph seems too truthful and pertinent not to be remembered:

These charges of plagiarism are easy to make and difficult to disprove. It is quite impossible for anybody to write anything that does not in some way touch on ground which has already been trodden by others. The human mind is limited and unchangeable; it never thinks a new thought. The most that it can hope to do is to present an old one in a new aspect.

It would be an extremely agreeable task to go into a detailed account of all the service rendered by Sickles during the years 1862 and 1863, but it would occupy too much space, however greatly his actions deserve such notice. From the first time he undertook any duty, as narrated, on the "Raid or advance to Stafford Court-house," down to his leaving the Army of the Potomac, very severely wounded at Gettysburg,

HIS DEEDS WERE RESPLENDENT.

In regard to the excellent services of Sickles at Fredericksburg, first, very little is generally known, where there was so much that should have been known. At one time the writer was in possession of a most circumstantial narrative containing the most interesting details in connection with the performances of Sickles and the Third Corps. These were loaned and lost, or rather never restored.

Under sympathetic and just superiors he received unexceptional commendations, as in his first battle in the Peninsula—Seven Pines, or Fair Oaks—at the hands of the honest Heintzelman. To hear Sickles tell the story of this, his first appearance on the field of battle, modestly but clearly, carries with it the assurance that he knew what he was about at the time, and recalls every circumstance after the lapse of 25 years. It was the opinion of all three Generals, intimates of the writer—Heintzelman, Hooker and Sickles—and the fourth, his cousin, Phil Kearny, that if the Third Corps had not been withheld and recalled by McClellan, the left wing of the loyal army would have triumphantly occupied the rebel Capital on the

night of June 1, 1862.

Hooker's Division, which included Sickles's Excelsior Brigade, continued to distinguish itself in spite of McClellan's chronic blundering throughout the operations on the Peninsula in the Summer of 1862, especially

AT MALVERN HILL.

The same broad claim for honor is made in favor of the same troops in the Pope campaign, one of the most trying in every respect to which the Union troops were subjected. The Third Corps was literally fought and wrought to pieces, so utterly depleted that it could not take part in the Antietam campaign, but was left, as it were, in the hospitals to recuperate and make new blood through rest and recruits. Though not with McClellan, it was not supine nor idle, since it was confided the protection of the most important line and vital point.

With Hooker's promotion to the Army of the Potomac, Sickles was placed at the head of the Third Corps, a proud distinction indeed for an individual who only a little more than a year previous held no military position at all. In the battle which rendered the ensuing campaign so memorable, the Third Corps

SURPASSED ITSELF,

and its leader won the praise of all, so much so that his ambition might have justly plumed itself for a higher flight, because after the failure of Hooker there was a great question who should succeed him, and among those named as fit, Sickles stood very high. The writer was intimate with men—unfortunately several among the lamented dead—who knew all that was going on in the White House by the "back stairs," so to speak, by which channel the most influence is often exerted and the direct truth most often known. At one time Sickles had a fair show, but it would appear that, as in the case of Kearny, he did not obtain.

At Chancellorsville the Third Corps, under Sickles as its leader—pre-eminently a representative man, "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh"—surpassed itself. It cannot be questioned that Sickles appreciated far better than did any other the movement of Jackson, and could have

ARRESTED OR CRIPPLED IT

had been permitted. There he was forced to lose the first opportunity which might have given a totally different course and result to the whole battle.

In the second place, the question of who did stop the "walk over" of Jackson's army—for it was an army in its strength, since he had nearly half of all Lee's forces—has given rise to so much bitter controversy that there is no use of reviving it here. Those who were present and ought to have known the fact—and of whom so many are dead—claim the honor for Sickles of the inspiration which exercised so happy an effect.

In the third place, it was his night attack which in a great measure re-established the connection of the Union line towards the Union right. It is utterly impossible, however, in such a sketch as this to go into the details, arguments and proofs which have employed so many pens and filled pages, so many as to amount to volumes.

In the fourth place: On Sunday, May 3, 1863, Sickles undoubtedly held at Hazel Grove, or Fairview Cemetery, the key-point of the field. His fighting there justified the application to this "salient" point of the Union line the epithet of

"DEATH ANGLE,"

although this term was particularly assigned to a similar position at Spottsylvania in the same month of the ensuing year, 1864. Hazel Grove deserves it, however, not only for the losses suffered by the Third Corps under Sickles, but for the fearful punishment inflicted in return upon the rebels. A distinguished corps commander, who at first seemed reluctant to do full justice to the Third Corps, spoke out in regard to this terrible contest and said that pretty much all the real fighting done at Chancellorsville proper on the great battle-day—Sunday—was done by the Third Corps. Had Sickles been supported promptly, as he should have been, and had the tens of thousands who lay idle co-

operated at the right time, this battle would not be counted among the misfortunes of the Army of the Potomac, but among its successes. If anyone is desirous of investigating this statement, let him take a detailed map of the battlefield and observe the locations of the troops, especially of the Fifth and First Corps, and consult a time-table of occurrences the consideration of which is equally important; also the official statement of the Union losses and the losses of the rebel divisions

OPPOSED TO SICKLES.

It is pretty conclusive as to what the First Corps did, as its list of casualties sums up 292, and that of the Fifth Corps 699. Both of these were posted so that they could have struck in flank fatally the masses which were hurled successively upon the Third Corps, which lost 4,039. According to their own official tables the casualties of Jackson's Corps or wing footed up nearly if not over 7,000.

It is a very painful thing to probe deep into old wounds and discover the original causes which it was stated to the writer have produced such sad effects. It was related that the injustice manifested by Meade toward Sickles was not due to anything which occurred on the 2d of July at Gettysburg, but to what had taken place nearly two months previous at the critical moment of the withdrawal from Chancellorsville, of which Meade had charge, when Sickles felt that he had been uncovered by Meade by the premature withdrawal of his pickets by Meade without notice to Sickles, and so reported to Hooker; and the latter spoke sharply to Meade in consequence, so much so that it is said Meade remarked that he never dreamed he would live to be reprimanded by a superior, a Regular, on the

COMPLAINT OF A VOLUNTEER.*

It is only known to a very few that Sickles was injured at Chancellorsville by the fragment of a shell on his sword-belt plate, which struck him about the pit of the stomach and caused him so much distress that he was obliged to ask for sick leave and return to New York, and put himself in the hands of physicians, and rest. The origin of the casualty was the explosion of a caisson so near Sickles that he was reported dead, and the horse he was riding died afterwards in consequence. The General still feels the effects of the concussion. When Hooker was moving northward, and expected soon to come in collision with Lee, he wrote a very pressing letter to Sickles, and asked him to hasten back and resume the command of his Third Corps. Against the earnest protest of his physician, (the celebrated Dr. Sayre,) who said he would not be responsible for the consequences if Sickles obeyed this call, the General, although suffering greatly, lost no time in responding to the summons of his friend and commander.

The very day that he joined Hooker the latter's superseding by Meade took place. Friends of Sickles, including officers in the Regular service, then and there advised him not to

CONTINUE WITH THE ARMY;

that he might expect injustice; that he could not hope for generous judgment; that he knew "the Meade temper," and that Meade was anything but friendly to him. "What is more," they urged, "you have the best excuse for not exposing yourself and your reputation. You are suffering from a severe injury to a vital organ. Take advice of friends, and do not run any such risks as threaten."

While these arguments were being urged upon Sickles, Hooker sent for him. He said: "I hear that your friends advise you to give up the command of your corps. I have nothing to say to combat their reasons, but I ask you as a favor to me to remain; that my successor may not allege that I did or caused the slightest embarrassment to him, which might appear to be the case if you did not continue at the head of your corps. Sick or well, continue to command it as you always have done, and if victory crowns the flag, I shall be happy to think that you were there to assist in

INSURING THE TRIUMPH."

Sickles obeyed the voice of duty, as well as that of his old commander, and well was he rewarded in two senses—very cruelly by him

be elected to serve to the extent of his ability against what might be considered his own convictions and those of his friends, and grandly by the country and those in authority then and afterward, and by all who can rise superior to prejudice and recognize magnificent service in a non-professional corps commander who could grasp the situation and do his duty with gallantry, decision and ability.

And here let it be remarked that it is not the attribute of every man at the head of troops to inspire them with the highest enthusiastic devotion and confidence, but such was undoubtedly the case with Sickles. His soldiers loved him, followed him, obeyed him, looking up to him with the same feeling that justified Henry of Navarre when he told his followers that if his headquarters flag was stricken down it was still floating in the white plumes of his helmet, and that they would be in the path of duty and of victory

IF THEY FOLLOWED THAT.

Or, to quote the thrilling lines of Macaulay, in his magnificent Ballad of Ivry:

And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may,

For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray,
Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst
the ranks of war,

And be your Oriflamme to-day the Helmet of Navarre.

Furthermore, to show the perfect self-possession of Sickles under the most trying circumstances, when he was struck by the missile which caused the loss of his leg, such was his presence of mind and calmness under the terrible effects of the shock, that he disengaged one of the straps attached to his saddle, buckled it tightly around his limb, as a tourniquet, stopped the exhausting hemorrhage, and thus saved his life. Had the same thought occurred to Albert Sidney Johnston, with a much slighter wound, he would not have perished with every promise of victory in his eye.

*Much in the three preceding paragraphs is denied by a friend of Meade. This the writer cannot settle, as the facts are not his, with no responsibility except for the opinions founded on statements furnished.

[To be continued.]



It has been wisely said that no man, however capable, can presume to write upon a battle, who has not been upon the battlefield; and not only upon the stage of action and accurately surveyed it with the eye, but has been all over that battlefield while it was in the identical condition in which the conflict raged upon it, while as yet Nature had not repaired the damages and changes produced by man—which repairs nature does with almost inconceivable rapidity—but also before labor, with various implements, has not yet changed the whole aspect through cultivation or through greed. It is said that some of the most noted battlefields of the world present their grander features, which are recognizable after the lapse of centuries, but it is very questionable if such minor peculiarities long continue to exist; such as the bottom brushwood which concealed the ambuscade of Mago, whence the Carthaginian light horse

FELL LIKE A THUNDERBOLT

upon the flank and rear of the Romans at the Trebia, or the Holt or Grove of trees whence issued the Numidian cavalry whose lances terminated the career of Marcellus, ever ready for battle. Temporary defensive works rapidly melt away under the effects of Summer rain and Winter frost, and time gradually, but inevitably, levels all. Battles often depend on accidents of ground, which escape any but the acutest observation, just as the broken Devil's Bridge arrested the march of Russia's greatest General, Suwarrow, or the sunken road which, according to certain historians, engulfed the obiding cuirassiers of Napoleon at Waterloo.

Fortunately the everlasting hills display the Union position at Gettysburg; the bolders which survived the glacial period, and the Round Tops thrown up in the Plutonian. Still, many lesser features or landmarks which in 1863 were most important objects, such as woods, have disappeared. Even if the Hamadryads could influence the howling course of cannon-balls and whistling career of the musketry, their silent prayers and unseen tears have had no effect to stay the ax of the less merciful, but

MORE PEACEFUL WOODCHOPPER.

Therefore, to thoroughly understand the movements and manuevers of Gettysburg, the field must be as it was on the first three days of July, 1863.

It has also been observed that more ink has been poured out on the subject of Waterloo than the blood-drench it received on the 18th of June, 1815, notwithstanding some 40,000 dead and wounded flooded it with the red tides of life on that day. Although the casualties on both sides at Gettysburg nearly approached if they did not equal or exceed the sacrifices at Waterloo, still almost as much—although not too much—ink has flowed in connection with the story of the different phases of the conflicts.

"Truth," says the axiom, "lies at the bottom of the well," and in the case in point, the well, like that of Jacob at Sychem, or that of Saladin in the citadel at Cairo, is very deep.

Again, West Point and the Engineers, the Regular Army and the "red tape," seem very unwilling to concede that the field was decided and the battle was won, and the North and the Nation were saved

BY A VOLUNTEER GENERAL,

without professional training, and a corps which was volunteer throughout—more so, perhaps, than any other corps which maintained the honor of the Union—"a peculiar people," who held and held together, and defy injustice and misrepresentation as no other corps ever did. And yet—"bless the old Third Corps, as we understand it"—such was and is the absolute truth.

The second day, of which Sickles was the hero, was the battle-day of Gettysburg. Gen. A. A. Humphreys, than whom no better nor braver soldier or General ever lived, always said it was the battle-day; and if he was not a judge in such a case, then no one is competent to sit in judgment upon any such occurrence. If the truth should be told, or is to be manifested, the battle of the first day was a fight to gain time for concentration.

This was just about a concise expression of Warren's opinion, and even Grant, who helped to break Warren's heart, admits that his capacity to conceive a military opinion

WAS MOST EXCELLENT.

The fight of Ziethen's Corps before Ligny, June 15, 1815, when Napoleon crossed the Sambre, retarding the French advance and enabling Blucher to settle himself in his position to accept battle on the 16th, was an elegant example of the same class of battles to which that of the 1st of July, 1863, belongs.

Reynolds pressed forward gallantly and died nobly, and Doubleday took his place and did all that a man under the circumstances could do; but if any one man was entitled to supreme credit it was John Buford with his cavalry. Gen. Wolsley, regarded in England as a General of first class, has demonstrated his own inconsiderate partiality or incapacity of judgment, by elevating Lee to the seventh heaven of perfection, the zenith of

MANHOOD AND SOLDIERSHIP,

and the rebel General Dick Taylor has sunk him to the lowest depth by his expression implying that at Gettysburg he had something like a stroke of idiocy.

The fact is that Lee was not a great General in the grand sense of the word. He was the favorite child of circumstances, by which he could not fail almost without his own volition, to profit to a certain extent, and, as has been said of Moltke, he can hardly be correctly judged, because he was hardly ever pitted against a General of ability. It was Lee's supreme good fortune always to have as his opponent some one who either threw away his best cards or played into his hand. After his success of July 1, he absolutely threw away his opportunity. He fell completely short in "push." On the second day he showed entire want of comprehensiveness and of understanding how to handle a large army; and on the third day he seemed to have

LOST HIS SELF-POSSESSION

or sang-froid, or rather, to avoid misconception, his judgment. On the first day the game was in his hand; on the second he failed to do much that might have made it so, and on the third he sacrificed his best troops and the cause which had entrusted its finest army to his leading. In fact, he had the honesty to admit that the error was his own.

I have already said that to be competent to prove a correct judgment of a battle, it is necessary to know the battlefield. Not one man in

a thousand—unless he is a thorough soldier, who has a good idea of the Tactics of the Three Arms combined, and is a soldier, too, devoid of prejudice—who has visited the field of Gettysburg, comprehends it in its full entirety, or the point on which the glory or the mistake of Sickles depends. They hear of and look at Cemetery Ridge and do not perceive, or do not allow themselves to acknowledge, that at a certain point of the Union line it ceases to be a ridge, and thence, until it commences to rise to the Round Tops, if not an actual depression, it is virtually so from its relative position as regards more elevated ground to the front and to the left flank; it is almost what might be styled a "kettle bottom," commanded on the rim by woods and elevations, and in it, troops must be constantly subjected to a plunging fire from these environments.

THE UNION "FISH-HOOK" LINE

was open to two perils; first, of being "punched" at the curve of the hook and half way up the shank, and of being turned to the left. To "split" an enemy asunder was Napoleon's general idea, or attack him, as at Dresden, on both wings. Lee tried the second plan on the second day, and the first plan on the third day. On the second day the attack on both wings failed, for several reasons; one for want of simultaneity, but mainly through the decision, individually, of Sickles, as to his assumption of position—abandoning the "kettle-bottom" and advancing to commanding ground; subordinately, in mass, through the self-sacrificing heroism of the Third Corps. No position in the world is more easy to be turned than that of Gettysburg, and that is what Longstreet and Hood wanted to do, and what many acute military minds think they started to do. The possession of the Round Tops, like, in a lesser degree, that of Powers Hill—the latter in case

PICKETT HAD BROKEN THROUGH—

were vital as regarded the successful holding of the Union lines. Still the Round Tops were not key-points, if Lee had turned our left, got in among our multitudinous trains, and planted himself, as master, across the communication of the Army of the Potomac with Washington.

On the other hand, the line assumed by Sickles, with its apex at the Peach Orchard, with his left resting on the Little Round Top, or rather the Granite Spur, and with his right in echelon, with its right flank not in air, because it was protected by the batteries of the Union left and right center; that line assumed by Sickles was the very one to stop a turning movement—and he had to stop it and did, because our left, where the trains were parked, had been left entirely unprotected.

A certain class of critics who think they can or are absolutely able to write or talk fluently, or who consider themselves professionals, or who wear stars, may argue until

PEN AND TONGUE AND STARS

wear out, but they cannot prove that an officer who is a judge of position and has the courage to hold it to the uttermost is in the wrong. That is just the "long and short" of the case of Sickles, and one may talk around it, and jump over it, and dive under it, but the solid fact remains unalterable.*

There is another case in point, which, although the example is again taken from the sea, yet it is most apposite. When Bonaparte was awaiting the arrival of his fleets to make possible the crossing of the channel for the invasion of England, Sir Robert Calder, with inferior forces, met on the 22d of July, 1805,

* An interesting anecdote suggests itself as pertinent to this occasion, to show that an officer should subordinate every personal consideration to the interests of his country.

In the reign of Queen Anne, Capt. Hardy, whose ship was stationed off Lagos Bay, happened to receive certain intelligence of the arrival of the Spanish galleons, under the protection of seventeen men-of-war, in the harbor of Vigo; upon which, without any warrant for so doing, he set sail, and made such expedition that he came up with and gave the intelligence to Sir George Rooke, who was then Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. In consequence of this information the Admiral made the best of his way to Vigo, where he took or destroyed

all the galleons and the ships-of-war. Sir George was sensible of the importance of the advice he had received; but after the fight was over and the victory obtained, he ordered Capt. Hardy on board, and with a stern countenance said: "You have done, sir, a very important piece of service; you have added to the honor and riches of your country by your diligence; but don't you know that you are liable to be shot for quitting your station?" "He is unworthy to bear a commission under Her Majesty," replied Capt. Hardy, "who holds his life as anything when the glory and interest of his country require him to hazard it."

On this intrepid answer the Admiral dispatched him home with the news of the victory and a recommendation to the Queen, who conferred upon him the honor of Knighthood, and afterwards made him a Rear-Admiral.

the combined fleet of France and Spain, steering northward to the rendezvous. He accepted the unequal battle, which most men would have avoided, arrested the enemy, and drove them into Vigo and Ferrol. In fact, he frustrated their move, as did Sickles that of the rebels against the Union left on the momentous 2d of July at Gettysburg. Alison styles Sir Robert Calder's success "the most momentous action ever fought by the navy of England." It traversed all Napoleon's plans; ended them. Nevertheless Sir Robert was blamed, almost disgraced, for not having done more. But when the truth became known the abused chieftain was glorified for his decisive action. Thereupon Alison exclaims: "History would indeed be useless if the justice of posterity did not often reverse its iniquitous decrees." This article is one written to assist in reversing the iniquitous judgment of some upon the commander of the Third Corps at Gettysburg.

When Wallenstein took command of the imperial army he said bloody, pitched battles enough had been fought, and he would show the world another method of making war. So he selected a position and defied Gustavus Adolphus, who broke his bones against it, and was there worsted for the first time. There, at Alto Feste, the great Swede sacrificed in vain his best troops, as did Longstreet, and was worsted. He utterly failed in what he set out to do, as did the rebels on the afternoon of July 2. It was the same with Napoleon, who shattered his left against Chateau Goumont at Waterloo.

It is a very great pity that someone at headquarters did not order the construction of

DEFENSIVE FIELD WORKS,

with the salient of a bastion at the solid stone Rose house, which was so solid that a 12-pound shot was squashed against its wall like an orange thrown against a rock. No doubt improvised earthworks and traverses to protect against an enfilading fire would have been most desirable, but the neglect to construct any defenses was assuredly not the fault of Sickles. He did not know until the rebel artillery opened that he was to be allowed to stay there, and there are plenty of instances when officers and troops formed salients and were not persistently abused for it; and although sometimes they suffered for it, at other times they won great success.*

Shortly after this battle our troops needed no orders to throw up defenses: they did it instinctively. Some sharp critic may say, "Why did not Sickles see to this himself?" It may be very smart to ask the question, but it is the smartness of ignorance. Sickles did not know that he was going to be allowed to hold any position to a certainty until the opening of the rebel artillery upon him settled the question. The graduates of all schools so hold together against outsiders—Monks of the Cross and Monks of the Flag—that it is very doubtful whether, if the light of the sun was turned on the correctness or error of the judgment of Sickles, those who take the view that he was wrong could not or would not see the contrary. One man, who really does know an immense deal about Gettysburg, never could find

ANY EXCUSE FOR SICKLES

until it was policy to perceive that he—Sickles—was right, and until three words from Grant served as an eye-opener. The writer saw the same as he does now at the moment he first visited the ground. Some of our ablest soldiers have since combatted the opinion, but it mat-

ters not how many declaim against it; fact is fact, right is right, and truth is truth, although asserting it justifies the proverb that "he who drinks of the fountain of truth often falls a victim to the very satisfying of his thirst."

With his mutilation at the Peach Orchard, Sickles's military career in the field terminated. Not necessarily so, because such was his energy and vitality, that within 16 days after the amputation, Sickles paid his respects in person to the President, and within three weeks

HE WAS ON HORSEBACK.

He might have taken the field again with honor to himself and his corps, which idolized him, had he not been prevented by those baneful influences which have deprived so many countries and armies of the services of their wisest and bravest at moments of vital importance to the result. That he did not lead his corps again was no fault of his nor of his loving soldiers.†

Witness his reception at Fairfax Station by his old troops on his visit to them in the field. The "reception" which Sickles experienced from his old divisions (three fused into two), "the Third Corps, as we understand it," ought to have consoled him, in a great measure, for his failure to recover his command of the Third Corps. It was a parallel to the "adieux" when he was torn with equal injustice from the Ex-

*The writer has examined this question of "salients" with great care, and has noted a large number of examples of such dispositions of troops, sometimes beneficial, sometimes successful, sometimes decisive. Salient formations have been adopted by Generals, considered the ablest, to accommodate their lines to the natural or artificial accidents of the field. The angle at the Peach Orchard at Gettysburg was not more "salient" than the formation of the same General at Hazel Grove, at Chancellorville. The difference, however, was in the eyes which looked upon and the hearts that judged the two cases, and in the subordinate observers. "small by degrees and beautifully less," who accepted the judgments and endeavored to impose them upon the country, and thus by condemning Sickles, condemn the practice of elevating volunteer officers to high commands.

†It is a very curious and instructive consideration recalling how often the jealousy of a Commander-in-Chief has succeeded in driving from his army a subordinate who, if listened to, would have saved corps and country. Charles of Lorraine, in a vain endeavor to save his reputation, drove out from the Austrian army a General, Nadasti, who would have saved Austria in the decisive, or rather most important battle of the Seven Years' War, Lenthen. A similar jealousy and abuse of power subordinated the lightning energies of Laudon to a Cuneator Daun and paralyzed his genius. The ruin of Nadasti's career hinged on a question, that of Lenthen, similar to that involving the judgment of Sickles at Gettysburg; and yet so it has been throughout the history of war.

celior Brigade, in the Spring of 1862, when the cries of his troops only grew silent with the dissipation of the smoke of the steamer which bore him away—only ceased long after the vessel itself had disappeared from sight. This incident has often been dwelt upon; it

STIRRED THE HEARTS OF MEN

deemed insensible to emotion, and lingered as a touching and remarkable event in their memories.

Years afterward, Gen. McDowell alluded to this occurrence, and spoke with astonishment of the testimony which it had presented of the extraordinary boldness possessed by Sickles upon the affections and trust of his troops. He said the incident occurred to his mind again and again as one of the most astonishing that he had ever witnessed. "That, alone," said he, "was sufficient to prove that Sickles was an uncommon man." This was the more striking as coming from McDowell, who was not given to sentiment.*

Another Regular, a Major-General, very calm in his judgment and careful in its expression, said, "Sickles is the smartest man in the Army of the Potomac"; then, feeling that he might have said too much, he added, "I do not mean to say the best soldier, but the smartest man."

There needed no stronger evidence of the capacity of Sickles than to qualify him thus in an army which contained so many able men. Again, one of the leading politicians of the

State of New York who ran for Governor, indorsed this, saying, "There is not an abler man in the United States."

THAN DAN SICKLES."

He did not hold the subject of his praise in warm friendship, for he was a Democrat, dyed in the wool, but knowledge and truth compelled the avowal. These commendations are not like the story of the "Seven Crows," which grew by repetition. In the case of the two Generals they were spoken to the writer, and the third was an avowed and an intimate friend who was too cynical to add a single beam of light, if there had been any chance to throw a shadow upon the general.

The news of his arrival at Fairfax Station in the Fall of 1863 was no sooner made known than all the regiments which prided themselves on having served under him as their brigade, division and corps commander, from the period of gloom succeeding the first Bull Run, into which he threw the first gleam of light; from that of the sickening disasters on the Peninsula; from that of the sadder slaughter at the first Fredericksburg; from the most glorious Sabbath at Hazel Grove, and from that even more persistent exhibition of valor between the Peach Orchard at Gettysburg—redder with his own and comrades' blood than any fruit with ripeness—and the Round Tops; all these veterans, baptized and then annealed in the fire of battle and the sweat of labors and of marches—formed in double rank, without arms, on either side along the whole length of the road which he had to traverse to reach Birney's headquarters. Birney on that memorable 15th of October, 1863, met the mutilated "hero of Gettysburg" with a wagon and four. Their appearance was the signal for

EXPRESSIONS OF WELCOME

such as were seldom heard even in the old Imperial Napoleonic armies. The horses could

*"Don't leave us, General! Don't leave us! Don't leave us!" the Excelsiors continued to cry as long as the human voice could be heard even in indistinct murmur of distance. The only absolute parallel to this case the writer has ever met, in his very extensive study of history, with the advantage of the most rare and valuable books, is that mentioned by the British General Mitchell, who was anything but a friend to Bonaparte, in his "Fall of Napoleon," III, 189. He says: "On the 15th [July, 1815,] the *Epervier* conveyed him out of Aix Roads; but wind and tide being unfavorable, the barge of the *Bellerophon* was sent to bring him on board; the crew of the French vessel continuing to cheer him as long as their voices could be heard."

Being called upon to mention the incident in the career of Sickles best calculated to serve as the subject of a poem, the Separation of Sickles from his troops was selected as suggestive. This drew forth a letter from a distinguished and prominent Third Corps man, which, more than corroborating my views, would be appended were it not for its length and revelations. When Gen. McDowell got to Washington he went at once to see President Lincoln, to urge upon him the injustice of such treatment toward an officer who possessed the affection and confidence of his thousands of men to so great a degree, and the injury thereby done to the service at large. Thereupon the President sent for Senators Harris, of New York; Fessenden, of Maine, and Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, and when the question again came up, Sickles was confirmed, and, to the great joy of his Excelsiors, sent back to only advance at a slow walk. From one end of the line to the other cheer upon cheer burst forth like crashes of thunder, succeeding so fast and loud that the acclamation bleuded into one continual peal, which did not cease with his passage, but followed it with equal fervor. The air was filled, overburdened with plumed hats and caps and wild hurrahs, and the welcome exhibited every phase of that honest, heartfelt, affectionate enthusiasm which is so rare—an enthusiasm born of the thorough appreciation of the cool, smiling bravery his men had so often witnessed in the field. This made the spontaneous ovation to their beloved commander an honest expression of the deepest respect and the loftiest love, and even when Sickles had disappeared within the tent of Birney, escorted by the Brigadiers, the men assembled in mass around, and gave way yet, for a long time, to the

UNRESTRAINED EXPRESSIONS

of their joy simply at having seen him again. "These hurrahs for Sickles seem to have made

his enemies' ears tingle for a long time afterward, and found expression and relief in the hazing or harassing of those who had uttered them."

Outsiders and civilians may undertake to argue that all this lip homage was a mere "hurrah." Those who cannot appreciate how very near a brave and able General comes to being transmuted into an idol by a soldiery who have followed him into the fire, watched how he bore himself there like a hero, and seen him share their sufferings and fatigues, will hardly yield their faith to any argument, because they are incapable of such a state of feeling, because never having been in a like position, their hearts cannot expand sufficiently to comprehend it. To such—and they are legion—let another fact speak, a fact which even cold-blooded egotists can understand.

The Third Corps felt not only with their lips, but in their pockets for Sickles. On the 14th of August previous "the camps (of the Third Corps) witnessed an affecting spectacle. The veterans of many honorable battles—the officers and men of Kearny's and Hooker's Divisions of the Third Corps—contributed

THEIR PAY FOR ONE DAY

to purchase for Gen. Sickles, their gallant and disabled commander, a magnificent carriage, horses and harness, as an expression of their loving respect; and when the wounded returned from the hospitals they would not be pacified till their names were added to the long list. The good opinion of these brave soldiers,—of one man who bore a musket, and had seen and admired his conduct at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg—was of far greater weight than the carping of Generals who sat in their chairs of ease and safety at Washington. The cheers of such voices, and especially those from the ranks, will resound through future centuries.

"This reception," to translate Gen. de Trobriand, (i. 188,) it must be confessed was not a manifestation in honor of their former Corps Commander alone. * * * In war soldiers

are perfectly able to appreciate the intrinsic worth of their Generals. It is not by tacitly permitting some one or another vulgar vice prohibited to them, or by converting authority into the instrument of intrigues, that a General acquires the confidence of his troops." [The famous Lieut.-Gen. de Rochambeau, the friend and comrade of Washington, bears eloquent testimony to this fact.] Their confidence is won only when he shows that he is fit to command. Be just, and you can be severe without exciting any resentment, even in the breasts of those who have been subjected to merited punishment. Be partial, and your indulgence towards some, like your exactions in regard to others, will result equally in the contempt of both the favored and the wronged.

In his heart of hearts the soldier always cherishes a

A SENTIMENT OF JUSTICE,

which regulates his judgment of his superior.

His own nearest personal interest is immediately connected with this; for how often the life of the private depends upon an order of his General—the result of a correct or erroneous inspiration.

This the reason why bad Generals spoil the best of troops, whereas good Generals retrieve had troops. The same men fight altogether differently, accordingly as they are well or ill commanded. If troops have confidence in their Generals they dash upon the enemy with an enthusiasm which knows no limit, because they feel satisfied that their regiment will not be compromised unnecessarily; and that if die they must, their deaths will at least be useful to the cause to which they have devoted themselves. On the other hand, if they feel that they are badly commanded—if they feel a conviction that they are to be sacrificed without result, through want of judgment, or by an intelligence obscured by the fumes of whisky, then indecision

TAKES THE PLACE OF ENTHUSIASM.

They advance under fire simply in obedience to discipline and for the preservation of their self-respect. In such a case, if they meet with energetic resistance, it is safe to bet that they

will fall back, growing against their commander, whom, in their distrust, they hold responsible for their check; whereas in the former case they will carry the position without counting the cost. Therefore it is not surprising that when an occasion presents itself, soldiers testify somewhat boisterously the interest they feel in the selection (by others) of a General imposed upon them."

In this view of the case—and it would seem a perfectly just one—this testimony settled the vexed question that "the Third Corps, as we understand it," indorsed, justified and exalted Sickles; and correspondingly condemned, rejected and depreciated those antagonistic to him; likewise the result of this injustice whose expression was the change made in

THE COMMAND OF THE CORPS.

In 1865 Sickles was sent on a secret mission to the Spanish-American Republics then at war with Spain. In this he discharged the delicate duty intrusted to him so entirely to the satisfaction of President Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward, that the thanks of the Government found expression in a formal official letter.

In 1866 Sickles was appointed Minister to the Netherlands, but declined the place. He was also offered by President Grant, through Mr. Fish, Secretary of State, the appointment of Minister to Mexico. This honorable employment Sickles, for reasons, would not accept.

In 1869 Sickles was sent as Minister to Spain. To his especial honor he it remembered that he was the only diplomatist who ever succeeded in opening direct negotiations with the Spanish authorities for the

EMANCIPATION OF THE SLAVES

in the Antilles—Cuba and Porto Rico—and for the acquisition of those islands by the United States. His negotiations for the abolition of slavery were successful, and as far as human judgment can decide, he would have succeeded in regard to Cuba and Porto Rico, if he had been sustained by the President and Secretary of State in the question of the Virginias in 1874 and 1875.

In conversations frequent, long and interesting with the General, he always seemed to pride himself especially on his administration of the Carolinas from September, 1865, to September, 1867. His government of these two States during their most trying struggle for recuperation is considered by the General the best work that he ever has done, and those who know the circumstances and are competent to decide, justify his pride in the result. Sickles was not only the military commander of a department embracing two States, one of them South Carolina, the volcano of Secession, still seething with virulence even if the active eruption was quelled, but he likewise summed up in his person all the powers and duties appropriate to the Civil and Military Government of these States. Sickles devised on sound and equitable bases the first system for organizing industry in the South

BY FREE LABOR.

This policy was promulgated in his General Order, No. 1, of Jan. 1, 1866, and the plan was adopted by Gen. Howard, in charge of the Freedman's Bureau, as the guide for that branch of administration in the Southern States. Mr. Orr, the rebel Governor of South Carolina, in an official letter written in the Autumn of 1867, publicly recognized the beneficial result of Sickles's administration; and in that document he admits that Gen. Sickles had solved the most difficult problem that confronted those at the helm of public affairs at the close of the war, and had given to South Carolina the best crop the people of that State had harvested in many years. To his success as a scholar, lawyer, party-leader, legislator, soldier and diplomatist—six distinct lines of activity—Sickles added the seventh by his brilliant work in the Carolinas, as one of the successful Statesmen of the Reconstruction period following the war.

SUMMARY.

The writer of this sketch or fragment was first attracted to Sickles by the outcry of some West Pointers and Engineers and of several other exclusive coteries on account of his movement at Gettysburg which saved the field, and battle,

and cause, and country. No occasion has since occurred on which the writer has not stood forth to chronicle him as one of the most remarkable and able men with whom, in the course of half a century of active life, he has been brought into intimate relations. There could not be the slightest interest in thus drawing this pen-portrait of Sickles. The labor has been, is, must be, totally disinterested. The closest intimacy with men deemed the greatest and ablest our country has produced enables the writer to draw the line between factitious and real reputations. A man whom the cold McDowell equally with the just Heintzelman, the glorious Hooker, the honest Lincoln, the overbearing Stanton, and a hundred other men enjoying good opportunities to judge, delighted to honor and to trust, ought to need no eulogy, and would not were he not the representative man of a mighty class whom to admit as successful endangers a school which with all the great services rendered the country, has done it also injuriously, because it is one of those fountains to which St. James allude as sending forth

"SWEET AND BITTER WATERS."

Moreover, Sickles and the writer do not agree at all on many vital questions; but that difference does not obscure the high respect entertained for his gallantry and his enormous brain power. What is more, when men who have caught sight of the truth through the lurid steam of battle and learned amid the churm of conflict to judge their fellows; when the fiery Burns, the immaculate McAllister, the ardent De Trobriand, the ice-cold Mott, the genial Biles, the calmly intrepid Birney, the knightly Graham, the steady Ward, the acute Sharpe and a thousand other individual men unite in a chorus of "Hail to the Chief" when the "Old Man" appears, and unite in one unbroken shout—prolonged, repeated, affectionate—to accept Sickles as their representative man and leader—then as Gustavus the III of Sweden said in regard to the greatest Swedish General, Torstenson, "Jealousy, stand paralyzed; calumniators, keep mute—who is sufficiently bold to appeal from such a judgment?"

Which of our Generals, which of our public men, nay more, which of the public men on the grand stage of the world's theater has played more leading roles in the most diverse characters than Daniel E. Sickles, and played them perfectly,—yes, perfectly, to the satisfaction of the appointing power and those immediately and remotely affected—perfectly, except in the eyes of those who must suffer if a layman is permitted to enjoy a triumph over hierarchies, rings and close corporations. The truly greatest, cube-like West Pointer, in the eyes of the writer, was Geo. H. Thomas, and he was compelled to show what was in him before he got any "show." It was fortunate for himself, the cause and country, that he was with Sherman on the Atlanta campaign, and more fortunate for himself and the country that Sherman left him behind to manifest himself in all his grandeur in the only immediately decisive battle of the rebellion—Nashville. Thomas could appreciate, to the fullest degree, an able volunteer, and under him, and under generous leaders like him, Sickles would have been allowed to manifest himself as worthy to rank as one of the world's corps commanders, whose names fill the trump of Fame. Nay, more, it is doubtful, if justly weighed, very few who stand highest in the annals of war were abler or even, if fairly compared, as able in many lines besides military as the subject of this sketch—a typical American Volunteer.

[The end.]



POSITION OF THE THIRD CORPS—MAJ.-GEN. SICKLES COMMANDING—AT GETTYSBURG, JULY 2 AT 2 P. M., WHEN THE SECOND DAY'S BATTLE OPENED.



THE LEFT FLANK OF THE ARMY WHEN THE ENGAGEMENT CLOSED.

